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Sister Vasa & The ROCOR: How ROCOR Adopted Politics as Their True Religion

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In a wholly unexpected move from the apathetic and indolent synod of the ROCOR–Moscow Patriarchate, a decree was issued on May 12th, finally returning the former “monastic” Vassa Larin to the status of a laywoman, no longer considered part of the monastic community of the ROCOR–MP. This decree, issued by the remiss First Hierarch, Nicholas of New York, together with Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco, states the following:

IT WAS RESOLVED:

1) To confirm the decision of Bishop Luke of Syracuse. 2) To forbid the former nun Vassa from wearing monastic attire and from using the name given to her at tonsure, and from presenting herself in public appearances as a nun of the Russian Church Abroad. 3) To publish this decision.

Whereby this Decree is issued.

+ NICHOLAS Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York
President of the Synod of Bishops
+ KYRILL Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America
Secretary of the Synod of Bishops [1]

As many of you know, Larin has been a raging ecumenist, a preacher of heresy, and an outspoken supporter of the LGBTQ agenda for nearly her entire public life. Many will recall that in 2017, she advised a parent—via social media—who claimed to have a homosexual child, that the parent should allow the child to “date” someone of the same sex openly. This statement, which remains on her social media to this day, caused such a stir that ROCOR–MP issued a limp-wristed condemnation of her advice, without taking any actual disciplinary action.





Barbara Larin (OCU), Odessa, Ukraine, May 6, 2025

Barbara Larin, on her monastic-themed Facebook page, wrote the following:

I can't reply to your question officially, but will reply to it personally. Because my personal opinion is not in line with some official pronouncements of my Church [...] I must say, and cannot say otherwise, that actively living it out is a sin. It's a no-no. But so are many other things, which we tolerate in ourselves as 'only human.' So I would say, let him "date" in the daylight, with your knowledge, so he's not chased into some kind of underground of illicit hook-ups in certain kinds of pubs or bars. You aren't "encouraging" him by saying, bring the guy here. Just like other parents, of heterosexual children, say, bring that girl (even the one of whom we disapprove) home, so we can meet her, aren't saying, go ahead and do whatever you want. But what you are doing is bringing your child's relationship into the daylight of your home, where your love, values, and mutual commitment, as family, can lend stability and light to your child's behaviour in his/her relationships [2].

This statement was so egregious that the Synod of Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (MP) was forced to release a statement saying:

The Holy Synod, having received the recent text of a publicly-posted e-mail exchange, dated 2nd July 2017, between the Nun Vassa (Larin) and a correspondent, entitled “EMAIL OF THE WEEK: (from a mother, on MY SON IS HOMOSEXUAL),” together with follow-up correspondence, also posted publicly on 8th July 2017, is compelled to confirm to its flock and to all Orthodox Christians that the counsel contained therein is in contradiction to the Church’s teaching on sexuality, repentance and family life. It does not represent an Orthodox understanding of anthropology or theology, and in the counsel it purports to offer presents a grave spiritual danger to those who might follow it, in terms of their own understanding of sexuality, as well as in the rearing of children [...]. We instruct therefore that the contents of these publicly-posted materials be disregarded by the faithful as contrary to the teachings of the Gospel and pastorally harmful; that they be withdrawn and removed from any web sites or publications that seek authentically to represent Orthodox theological and pastoral teaching; and that in the future such materials be treated with most extreme reticence and caution [3].

In 2023, I wrote an article entitled *The Public Ecumenist: Vassa Larin & The Subverting of Holy Orthodoxy*, in which I documented her ecumenist visit to Pope Francis—where she kissed the hand of the Arch-Heresiarch of Rome—advocated on behalf of Ukraine and against Russia, and violated numerous canons of the Orthodox Church, all of which I discussed in detail.

Yet all these years later, the flaccid Synod of the ROCOR–MP has finally received word from Moscow that something must be done about her. But what, we must ask, was her crime this time? Was it her 2017 social media post encouraging a parent to allow their homosexual child to openly live in sin? Was it her relentless ecumenism, which ROCOR–MP supposedly opposes? Or was it her public violation of the holy canons and her outright preaching of heresy? Of course, the answer is: none of the above. As many are painfully aware, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the Moscow Patriarchate, is not in the business of canonically disciplining those who publicly preach heresy—as Larin and others (e.g., Metropolitan Jonah Paffhausen) have done over the years. They are not interested in upholding the apostolic or ecumenical canons of the Orthodox Church when those canons are violated openly and repeatedly.



Barbra Larin (OCU) Metropolitan Evstratiy (OCU)
at Mikhailovsky Monastery in Kyiv (May 9th, 2025).

So, if her numerous offenses against the very doctrines and laws of the Church were not the cause for action, what was? The answer is politics—Ukrainian politics, to be precise. And not just Ukrainian politics in general, but Larin’s vocal support for the so-called “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” (OCU).

In recent weeks, Larin has been publicly posting about her travels to Ukraine, where she has been giving lectures at the newly stolen Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, located in the Mikhailovsky Monastery—as a representative of the ROCOR–MP. She has also participated in events affiliated with the OCU, the pseudo-church body established by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In a May 9th Facebook post, she celebrates the lectures she has been giving in collaboration with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, stating:

Yesterday and today I gave talks (in Russian) at the Kyiv Spiritual Theological Academy: at the round table yesterday on issues of The Typicon and Contemporary Liturgical Practice and (today) on “Freedom” and “Peace” in the Post-Truth Era. Thank you for the warm welcome of the students and faculty. And to Metr. Evstratiy [Zorya] for his hospitality. I was very moved when, on my way to one of my talks, in front of the Mikhailovsky Cathedral I passed by the funeral procession of a fallen Ukrainian soldier. I am told that soldier-funerals happen here almost every day, at this church [4].

Is any of this a surprise to those who know anything about Barbara (Vassa) Larin? Of course not. None of it is shocking to anyone who has followed her work online over the years. However, this article is not primarily about Larin—the former publicly preaching heretic of ROCOR–MP, now turned OCU. It is, rather, an indictment of the so-called “Holy” Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (MP).

Why focus on the ROCOR–MP Synod and not on Larin herself? The fact is, no one expected anything different from Larin. She has shown her cards time and again. The apathetic Synod of ROCOR–MP has simply sat on its hands, doing nothing about her brazen heresy and ecumenism. And how could they? Their master in Moscow—Patriarch Kirill and his Patriarchal Synod—are enthusiastic participants in the World Council of Churches and engage regularly in the pantomime of ecumenism, not only with heterodox Christian sects but also with entirely foreign religions, including pagan Buddhists.



Met. Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chair of the Moscow Patriarchate Department of External Church Relations meets with Thailand's Buddhist Supreme Patriarch in Bangkok, November 28, 2024.

What this reveals to all of so-called "World Orthodoxy" is that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (MP) does not truly care about theology, doctrine, or the purity of the Orthodox faith. They only act when their real dogmas are threatened—those of *Русский мир*. For the Anglophone reader, that is '*Russkiy mir*' ("the Russian World")—an ideological and cultural concept envisioning a transnational community united by the Russian language, culture, Orthodoxy, and a shared heritage centered on Moscow. It promotes the belief that Russia has a unique civilizational mission and the right to guide and protect Russian-speaking peoples and Orthodox Slavs both within and beyond its borders. The ROCOR–MP has never lifted a finger to defend against heresy, ecumenism, or the erosion of doctrinal integrity because they have become reeking ethno-phyletists. Their loyalty is not to the Apostolic Faith, but to their handlers in Moscow—who openly preach the pan-heresy of ecumenism. And how can they speak against what their master's so brazenly practice?

For those still within ROCOR–MP, Larin should be the least of your concerns. What should truly alarm you is the reality that after all these years, the only thing that moved the Synod to act against Larin was a political transgression—Larin's public support for the pseudo-bishops of the OCU. It was only when this support offended the sensibilities of their Moscow overlords that pressure was applied to Metropolitan Nicholas and the rest of the Synod to finally do what they had refused to do for so long.

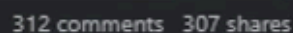
The ROCOR–MP has now shown us all their true priorities: their real faith is worldly politics, their real theology is *Russkiy mir*, and tragically, Sergianism is not only alive and well in the Moscow Patriarchate but also thriving in the Synod of ROCOR–MP in Manhattan.



My vocation, which is from God and not from men, is that of a nun living and working (and even

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Below I post a few photos of me, one in my habit today and one not in my habit (on the bus on my way to Kyiv last week). It's me, Sister Vassa, who I am in both photos. Nobody changes that, not any clothing nor any decree, - and certainly not the uncanonical, shameful one issued recently by a ROCOR hierarchy that has lost its way. Christ is risen, dear friends!



References

- [1]. "Decree of the Synod of Bishops No. 01/05/2025 to His Grace Bishop Luke of Syracuse, and to Barbara Larin (formerly the Nun Vassa)," Official Website of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside, accessed May 17th, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20250517040657/https://synod.com/synod/eng2025/20250516_enukazsv.html
- [2]. Sister Vassa Larin, "EMAIL OF THE WEEK: (from a mother, on MY SON IS HOMOSEXUAL)," Facebook Post, July 8th, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/CoffeeWithSisterVassa/posts/email-of-the-week-from-a-cousin-of-mine-about-my-recent-correspondence-with-a-wo/767429780102527/>
- [3]. "Circular Communique from the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops," Official Website of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, accessed May 17th, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20170722010751/https://www.synod.com/synod/eng2017/20170719_encircularnotice.html
- [4]. Barbra Larin, "Yesterday and today I gave talks (in Russian) at the Kyiv Spiritual Theological Academy," Facebook Post, May 9th, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16T8fukcWB/>